

party that trouble would arise from the fact that Jefferson and Burr had the same number of votes in the Electoral College. Jefferson clearly showed this in a letter of December 15th to Colonel Burr. In this he sketched the rumored policy of the Federalist party, which would consist of preventing the election, of a President by the House of Representatives as well as by the Electoral College. He did not, at the time, know Burr's true character; but the skilful wording of the letter, and its evident purpose to conciliate Burr, show that he was apprehensive lest ambition should prevail with him over party fidelity. What passed between the two can never be definitely determined, for neither committed anything to writing during this period; but one thing is clear, Burr was already deep in negotiation with the Federalists; Jefferson knew that he had been approached by them, and yet he was so thoroughly deceived as to Burr's position, that he could write to his daughter, Mrs. Eppes, on January 4th, 1801 : "The election is understood to stand 73, 73, 65, 64. The Federalists were confident at first they could debauch Colonel B. from his good faith by offering him their vote to be President, and have seriously proposed it to him. His conduct has been honorable and decisive and greatly embarrasses them." It was impossible that Jefferson could much longer remain so completely in the dark, but even as late as February 1st, he was still trying to maintain unbroken relations with Burr. He wrote to him on that date the last letter that was ever to pass between them. In it he denounced as a forgery a letter in

his handwriting to Judge Breckenridge, in which Burr's character was bitterly attacked. But the day was past for the harmony which Jefferson hoped the letter might strengthen. The Federalist caucus of the House of Representatives had, by a decided majority, pledged the support of the party to Burr. This step had been taken despite Hamilton's vehement opposition. To his eternal honor Jefferson's great rival refused to lend his countenance to a scheme to defeat the will of the people, and bitterly as he hated and distrusted Jefferson, he believed him justly entitled to the office of President. ,On February nth the members of both Houses assembled in